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ABSTRACT

The Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT) are national examinations designed to assess a student's chances of success at the college level. There are two SAT examinations, the SAT I, a reasoning assessment of students' verbal and mathematics skills, and the SAT II, in which students are tested in specific subject areas. In Wake County (North Carolina), 3,337 high school seniors took the SAT I, representing 76% of the county's seniors. The average SAT score for Wake County Public Schools seniors in 1997-98 was one of the highest in North Carolina, second only to one other district. This average score increased by 5 points over 1996-97. Significant gaps continued to exist between males and females and black and white students, but this gap, which is also seen nationally, has been closing over the past decade. An appendix contains a report of SAT scores according to family income, parent education level, high school grade point average, and high school rank. (Contains seven tables.) (SLD)

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E&R Report No. 99.11

MEASURING UP

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EVALUATION AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

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1997-98 Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) Results

October 22, 1998

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ED 431 810

ABOUT THE SAT

The SAT is a national examination, offered through the College Board, designed to assess a student's chances of success at the college level. During the 1997-98 school year, students registered for nearly 2.8 million SATs—a 5.4 percent increase from last year. In Wake County, the number of seniors taking the SAT I rose to 3377 in 1997-98 from 3130 in 1996-97.

There are two types of SAT exams: SAT I and SAT II. The SAT I is a reasoning assessment of students' verbal and mathematics skills. Through the SAT II students are tested in specific subject areas. This bulletin summarizes national, state, and county SAT I data.

In April 1995, the College Board *recentered* the score scales for students taking the SAT to reflect the contemporary test-taking population. Recentering allows for easier interpretation of scores and more simple comparisons between students' verbal and mathematics abilities.

To permit comparisons with previous years, the College Board has provided conversions of old scores to the new scale. Conversions and new scales are used throughout this bulletin.

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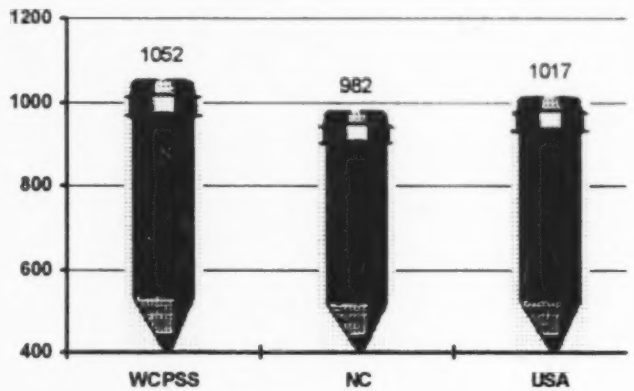
DISTRICTWIDE RESULTS

The average SAT score for WCPSS seniors in 1997-98 was one of the highest of all NC districts—second only to Chapel Hill-Carrboro!

The average score for WCPSS students increased by 5 points over 1996-97. This increase exceeds the 1 point increase for students nationwide, and is more than the 4 point gain for the state. A comparison of WCPSS, NC, and the United States is shown below.



While scores were up, participation of the WCPSS senior class also rose two points to 76%. U.S. participation rose one point to 43% and NC participation rose three points to 62%.

All scores are reported on the recentered scale.

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The approximate rate of 76% participation in the WCPSS is calculated by dividing the number of students who took the SAT by the size of the 12th grade class at the end of the eighth month of the senior year. The average WCPSS senior taking the test scored 19 points higher on the math test and 16 points higher on the verbal test than the average senior across the country.

WCPSS average math scores have increased 33 points in the last nine years (see Table 1). Average verbal scores increased 20 points, while participation rates remained stable at or near the 75% mark.

The WCPSS total score increase of 53 points over nine years greatly exceeds both the national increase of 16 points and the NC increase of 34 points. It is also notable that over the past nine years there has been a steady increase in scores except for a one-point decline in 1994.

Table 1: USA, NC, and WCPSS Scores Over Time

Year	WCPSS				North Carolina				USA			
	Total	Math	Verbal	Part.	Total	Math	Verbal	Part.	Total	Math	Verbal	Part.
1998	1052	531	521	75.6	982	492	490	62.0	1017	512	505	43.0
1997	1047	529	518	73.6	978	488	490	59.0	1016	511	505	42.0
1996	1042	525	517	73.3	976	486	490	59.0	1013	508	505	41.0
1995	1039	524	515	76.0	970	482	488	60.0	1010	506	504	41.0
1994	1030	520	510	75.0	964	482	482	60.0	1003	504	499	42.0
1993	1031	521	510	76.0	964	481	483	60.0	1003	503	500	43.0
1992	1025	516	509	74.0	961	479	482	57.0	1001	501	500	42.0
1991	1007	508	499	75.0	952	474	478	57.0	999	500	499	42.0
1990	999	498	501	73.0	948	470	478	55.0	1001	501	500	40.0

The score for the average WCPSS student compared well to students in other similar large school districts in other states as illustrated in Table 2. While WCPSS exceeded several districts, the average score was lower than the average score in Fairfax County Virginia.

Table 2: Comparison of Wake to Similar Large Urban/Suburban Districts

1997-98 SAT Scores	Verbal	Math	Total	Part. Rate
Wake County, NC	521	531	1052	76%
Cobb County, GA	514	510	1024	82%
Anne Arundel County, MD	513	533	1046	NA
Fairfax County, VA	540	555	1095	85%
Virginia Beach, VA	505	495	1000	NA

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Table 3: Wake County Public School System School-by-School SAT 1995-1998 Scores

	1997-98				1996-97				1995-96				1994-95			
	Part.	Verbal	Math	Total	Part.	Verbal	Math	Total	Part.	Verbal	Math	Total	Part.	Verbal	Math	Total
USA	43.0%	505	512	1017	42.0%	505	511	1016	41.0%	505	508	1013	41.0%	504	506	1010
NC	62.0%	490	492	982	59.0%	490	488	978	59.0%	490	486	976	60.0%	488	482	970
Wake County	75.6%	521	531	1052	73.6%	518	529	1047	73.3%	517	525	1042	76.0%	515	524	1039
Apex	78.6%	541	558	1099	78.6%	531	546	1077	79.1%	528	538	1066	83.0%	524	538	1062
Athens	76.5%	513	537	1050	72.4%	503	520	1023	76.8%	497	515	1012	80.3%	496	504	1000
Broughton	82.7%	534	550	1084	82.3%	529	543	1072	78.8%	541	549	1090	77.7%	529	544	1073
Cary	76.2%	522	528	1050	75.5%	515	518	1033	82.7%	525	526	1051	79.2%	516	522	1038
East Wake	67.9%	470	485	955	67.1%	480	490	970	58.8%	459	465	924	66.5%	474	491	965
Enloe	86.7%	562	565	1127	81.9%	569	567	1136	79.2%	573	568	1141	81.6%	561	564	1125
Fuquay	54.4%	489	489	978	68.8%	490	501	991	65.2%	499	498	997	54.3%	499	493	992
Garner	57.4%	492	506	998	54.3%	487	500	987	61.3%	482	488	970	64.2%	487	495	982
Leesville	85.7%	538	545	1083	81.3%	528	545	1073	81.1%	539	556	1095	85.0%	524	539	1063
Millbrook	73.1%	502	509	1011	72.7%	518	523	1041	76.1%	508	517	1025	80.6%	510	510	1020
Sanderson	78.6%	514	525	1039	75.6%	518	543	1061	75.4%	502	516	1018	81.5%	517	529	1046
Wake Forest	72.7%	517	522	1039	76.6%	508	516	1024	69.2%	500	507	1007	74.4%	496	499	995

Part. signifies participation rate.

As shown above, total scores for seven of Wake County's high schools improved over the 1996-97 scores and only two schools had a total score below the NC average.

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Last year, WCPSS had the fourth highest score of districts across the state. This year WCPSS ranked second. Two other counties that led Wake last year, Watauga and Madison, saw a decline in their scores. Watauga seniors dropped one point from 1048 to 1047, and Madison fell 45 points from 1072 to 1027. Chapel Hill-Carrboro continues to lead NC districts with a score of 1188.

Table 4: 1998 Average Total Scores and Participation Rates for Minority Groups for the Nation, North Carolina, and Wake County and Its Five Cluster Counties

	TOTAL				BLACK			FEMALE		
SYSTEM	%	V	M	T	V	M	T	V	M	T
USA	43	505	512	1017	434	426	860	502	496	998
NC	62	490	492	982	421	418	839	488	479	967
Wake County	75.6	521	531	1052	441	438	879	515	515	1030
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	90.8	590	598	1188	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	69.6	493	501	994	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Durham	77.3	496	499	995	434	437	871	493	488	981
Guilford	71.5	491	495	986	424	422	846	490	481	971
Winston-Salem/Forsyth	71.2	494	500	994	420	423	843	492	486	978

V = Verbal, M = Math, T = Total, % = of Senior Class Taking Test

SAT information can be disaggregated in many ways. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, significant gaps continue to exist between males and females and Black and White students. The trend can be seen nationally as well as state- and county-wide. However, this gap has been closing over the past decade according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Table 5: Disaggregated Results by School

		TOTAL			ETHNICITY						GENDER					
					BLACK			WHITE			MALE			FEMALE		
SCHOOL	%	V	M	T	V	M	T	V	M	T	V	M	T	V	M	T
Apex	78.6%	541	558	1099	446	440	886	545	564	1109	539	570	1109	542	547	1089
Athens	76.5%	513	537	1050	470	446	916	539	561	1100	517	552	1069	509	523	1032
Broughton	82.7%	534	550	1084	415	443	858	556	570	1126	538	571	1109	529	531	1060
Cary	76.2%	522	528	1050	471	453	924	528	533	1061	530	549	1079	516	512	1028
East Wake	67.9%	470	485	955	401	404	805	491	509	1000	482	512	994	461	465	926
Enloe	86.7%	562	565	1127	441	440	881	606	604	1210	584	595	1179	546	542	1088
Fuquay	54.4%	489	489	978	422	414	836	500	500	1000	502	504	1006	479	476	955
Garner	57.4%	492	506	998	430	439	869	511	529	1040	495	526	1021	490	496	986
Leesville	85.7%	538	545	1083	432	421	853	543	552	1095	542	558	1100	535	532	1067
Millbrook	73.1%	502	509	1011	462	452	914	516	525	1041	512	538	1050	495	488	983
Sanderson	78.6%	514	525	1039	451	439	890	533	544	1077	510	540	1050	518	512	1030
Wake Forest	72.7%	517	522	1039	449	444	893	536	539	1075	527	535	1062	510	511	1021
USA	43.0%	505	512	1017	434	426	860	526	528	1054	509	531	1040	502	496	998
NC	62.0%	490	492	982	421	418	839	512	514	1026	493	509	1002	488	479	967
Wake County	75.6%	521	531	1052	441	438	879	537	547	1084	528	551	1079	515	515	1030

V = Verbal, M = Math, T = Total, % = Percent Tested

C: High School Principals, Members, Cabinet, Members, Board of Education, Media Specialists, Instructional Resource Teachers, E&R Staff, E&R Advisory Committee, ISD

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Wake County
Participation Rate[1]=75.6%

Table 6

Appendix
1997-98 SAT Scores
School System Report
Verbal

	SYSTEM			U.S.		GAP
	N	Average	%	Average	%	From U.S.
All Students	3377	521	100	505	100	16
Family Income						
Less Than $10,000	41	435	1	427	5	8
$10,000-$20,000	135	455	5	451	9	4
$20,000-$30,000	229	477	8	477	11	0
$30,000-$40,000	319	500	11	495	13	5
$40,000-$50,000	306	506	11	506	11	0
$50,000-$60,000	339	528	12	514	11	14
$60,000-$70,000	320	533	11	521	9	12
$70,000-$80,000	347	522	12	527	8	-5
$80,000-$100,000	429	540	15	539	9	1
More than $100,000	442	559	15	559	13	0
No Response	470					
Parent Education Level						
No High School Diploma	20	418	1	411	4	7
High School Diploma	734	482	23	473	34	9
Associate's Degree	264	491	8	489	8	2
Bachelor's Degree	1305	524	41	525	28	-1
Graduate Degree	843	564	27	556	25	8
High School Grade Point Average						
A+	277	622	9	613	7	9
A	415	591	13	569	15	22
A-	426	562	14	542	16	20
B	1388	504	44	483	48	21
C	604	445	19	430	13	15
D,E, or F	33	399	1	408	0	-9
No Response	234					
High School Rank						
Top Tenth	443	622	16	590	21	32
Second Tenth	507	562	18	530	22	32
Second Fifth	789	525	28	494	28	31
Third Fifth	896	469	32	454	24	15
Fourth Fifth	167	433	6	427	4	6
Fifth Fifth	36	424	1	408	1	16
No Response	539					

[1]Participation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who took the SAT by the size of the 12th grade class at the end of the eighth month of the senior year.

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Wake County
Participation Rate[1]=75.6%

1997-98 SAT Scores
School System Report
Math

Table 7

	SYSTEM			U.S.		GAP
	N	Average	%	Average	%	From U.S.
All Students	3337	531	100	512	100	19
Family Income						
Less Than $10,000	41	444	1	446	5	-2
$10,000-$20,000	135	466	5	463	9	3
$20,000-$30,000	229	482	8	482	11	0
$30,000-$40,000	319	506	11	497	13	9
$40,000-$50,000	306	516	11	509	11	7
$50,000-$60,000	339	540	12	518	11	22
$60,000-$70,000	320	544	11	525	9	19
$70,000-$80,000	347	536	12	532	8	4
$80,000-$100,000	429	553	15	546	9	7
More than $100,000	442	573	15	572	13	1
No Response	470					
Parent Education Level						
No High School Diploma	20	456	1	441	4	15
High School Diploma	734	491	23	477	34	14
Associate's Degree	264	497	8	491	8	6
Bachelor's Degree	1305	536	41	532	28	4
Graduate Degree	843	574	27	563	25	11
High School Grade Point Average						
A+	277	646	9	629	7	17
A	415	610	13	582	15	28
A-	426	574	14	554	16	20
B	1388	513	44	487	48	26
C	604	449	19	428	13	21
D,E, or F	33	407	1	411	0	-4
No Response	234					
High School Rank						
Top Tenth	443	647	16	607	21	40
Second Tenth	507	576	18	543	22	33
Second Fifth	789	537	28	500	28	37
Third Fifth	896	474	32	453	24	21
Fourth Fifth	167	440	6	421	4	19
Fifth Fifth	36	395	1	403	1	-8
No Response	539					

[1]Participation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who took the SAT by the size of the 12th grade class at end of the eighth month of the senior year.

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